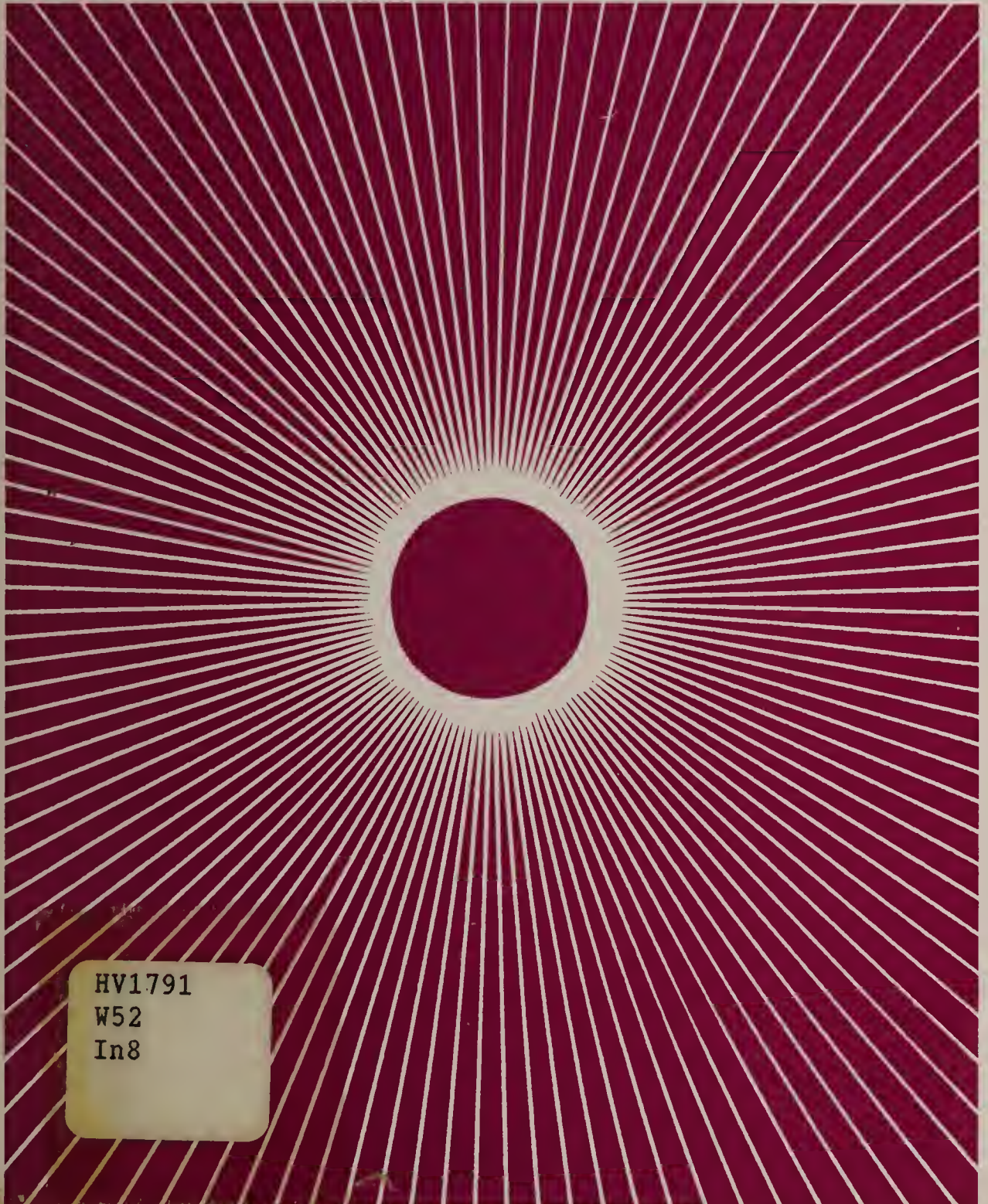


In Focus:

A Resource Guide for People
with Visual Impairments



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Dear Friend:

I am proud to introduce this guide to resources for persons with visual impairments. A group of Westchester-based agencies have joined forces with the County's Office for the Disabled to put together what we hope will be a valuable tool for the visually impaired, their families and advocates.

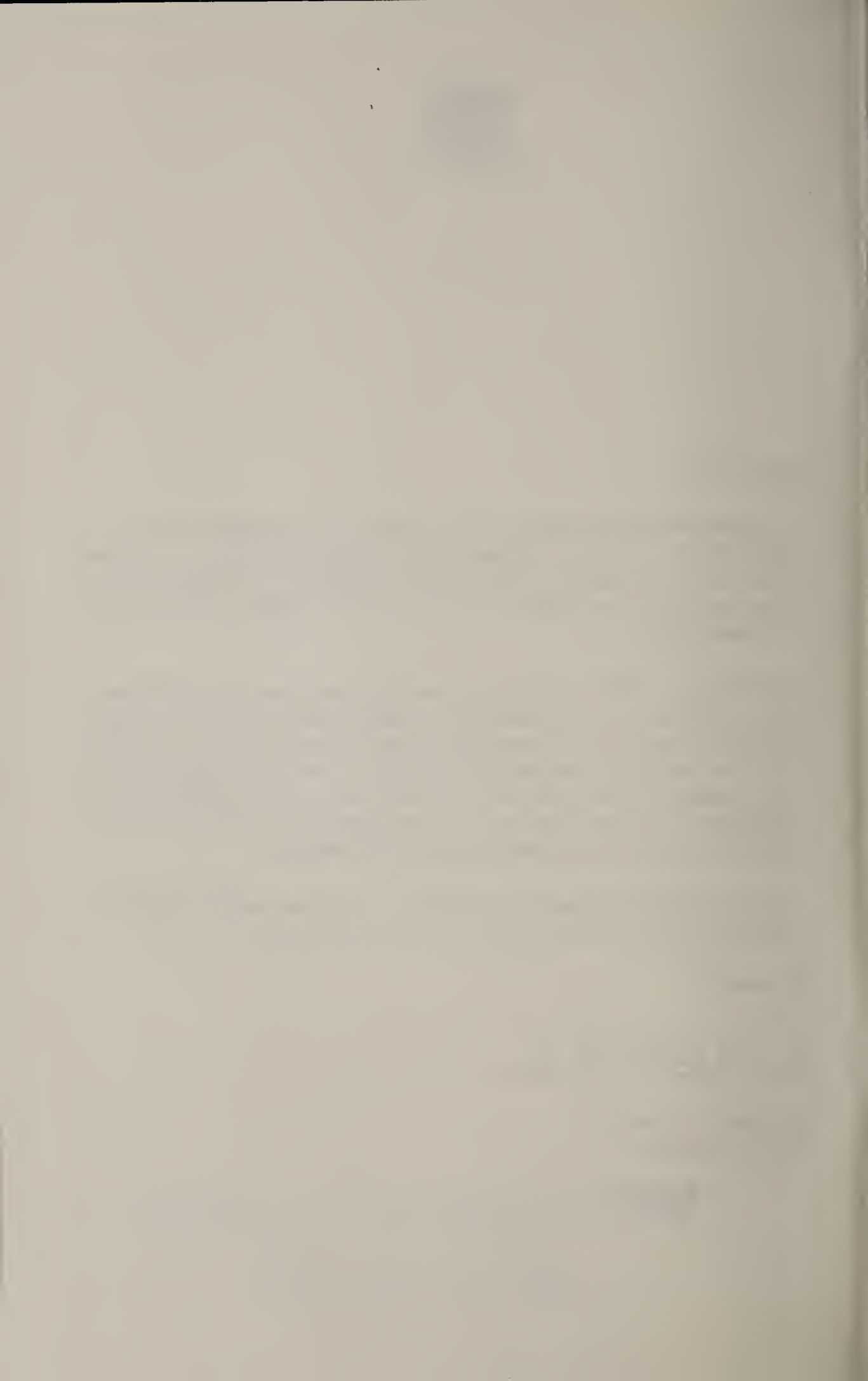
More than 11 million Americans cannot meet normal standards of vision, even with corrective lenses. There is hope and there is help available for every one of those individuals. From "talking" computers and other high tech devices for the blind, to low vision lenses, guide dogs, mobility canes and the like, there are products and services available in our County which can maximize every visually impaired person's ability to live, work and play independently.

I hope this guide will provide direction to all those people who desire autonomy and an enhanced quality of life. Good luck.

Sincerely,

Andrew P. O'Rourke
County Executive

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND
15 WEST 16th STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10011



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EYE-Q-TEST*

DO YOU BELIEVE the following statements are TRUE or FALSE?

1. You can save your sight by limiting use of your eyes.
2. You can damage your eyes by using them too much.
3. If you are legally blind, you have no vision.
4. Sitting close to the television will damage your eyes.
5. All vision can be corrected with the "right" glasses.

Answers:

None of the statements is true, yet many people cling to all or some of these beliefs.

1. Not using the eyes does not protect them or prevent further damage.
2. Using your eyes does no harm.
3. Ninety percent of the "legally blind" have some usable vision.
4. Doctors agree that there is little danger in sitting as close as one foot to a television set in good operating condition — not even from radiation.
5. More than 11 million Americans have less than normal vision even with corrective glasses.

*Source: National Association for Visually Handicapped.



MEDICAL SERVICES — DIAGNOSIS AND EVALUATION

Vision Screenings

Brief and superficial, a vision screening will typically include tests of visual acuity, near and at a distance; some tests of gross eye muscle functioning and a test for glaucoma, known as tonometry. However, there are many problems, some of them serious, that would not be identified by such testing. A vision screening is not a substitute for a thorough eye examination.

Tonometry is a test that uses non-invasive means to measure the pressure inside the eye. A higher than normal pressure may or may not signal the existence of glaucoma; but it is at the very least a good indication for referral for a complete eye exam. Likewise, normal intraocular pressure does not totally rule out the existence of glaucoma.

Visual acuity testing is valuable for identifying amblyopia, cataracts, macular degeneration, as well as other conditions that affect sharpness of vision, in addition to its main purpose of determining the need and prescribing glasses for uncorrected or poorly corrected refractive errors.

Vision screenings are a good strategy for educating people about the importance of regular and thorough eye examinations, while, at the same time, detecting and identifying any significant problems which they may not be aware they have.

Eye Examinations

If Paul Newman's eyes don't seem as blue as they used to be, or if you can't read the credits on your favorite TV show, or you can't tell if it's your bus until it has passed you by, or if you know it's wise to have your eyes tested on a regular basis; then you will want to make an

appointment with a vision professional, either an ophthalmologist or an optometrist.

Ophthalmologist: A physician (M.D.) who specializes in diagnosis and treatment of all defects and diseases of the eye by prescribing drugs or glasses, performing surgery or by other types of treatment.

Optometrist: A health care professional (O.D.), specializing in the examination, diagnosis and treatment of conditions of the visual system who is specially educated to examine the eyes and related structures to detect vision problems, eye diseases or other abnormalities and provide treatment by prescribing lenses, contact lenses or other optical devices and vision therapy.

Optician: A maker of glasses who grinds lenses to prescriptions, fits them into frames and adjusts frames to the wearer.

Eye examinations can be performed privately or at hospital eye clinics by either an ophthalmologist or optometrist. It is advisable when calling a doctor for an appointment to inquire whether insurance, Medicare and/or Medicaid assignment are accepted. After the eye examination when the new glasses are ready, they should be verified by the prescribing doctor to make sure that the prescription has been filled correctly.

If you do not have the name of a local optometrist for an eye examination, call the referral service of the American Optometric Association at 800-342-9836. The American Academy of Ophthalmology through its National Eye Care Project sponsors a toll-free Helpline which provides referrals to eye care for disadvantaged senior citizens who are 65 or older, legal residents or U. S. citizens and who do not have an ophthalmologist. The number is 1-800-222-EYES (1-800-222-3937).

Each hospital eye clinic has its own schedule, usually once or twice each month, for part of a day. Appointments are generally required. Doctors usually rotate responsibility for clinic duty. The doctor examines the patient, and provides a prescription which needs to be filled elsewhere since glasses and other optical aids are not obtained at a hospital eye clinic. The examination fee tends to be based on a sliding scale depending on the amount a patient can afford, with private insurance, Medicaid and Medicare assignment accepted for payment. With Medicare, the patient is usually billed for the co-payment, the remainder of the bill that Medicare does not cover. For specific information, call your local community hospital and ask for the eye clinic.

Eye Clinics

Bronxville

Lawrence Hospital Clinic (914) 337-7300
55 Palmer Avenue

Montrose

F.D.R. Veterans Administration Hospital (914) 737-4400
VA Health Care Facility—Route 9A

Mt. Vernon

Mt. Vernon Hospital (914) 664-8000
North 7th Avenue

New Rochelle

New Rochelle Hospital (914) 632-5000
16 Guion Place ext. 3610

Port Chester

United Hospital (914) 934-7431
Boston Post Road

Valhalla

Westchester County Medical Center (914) 285-7662

Yonkers

St. John's Riverside Hospital (914) 964-4315
967 North Broadway

St. Joseph's Hospital (914) 378-3845
127 South Broadway

Yonkers General Hospital (914) 964-7472
2 Park Avenue

Low Vision Services

Low vision services are the sources for devices, techniques and program information which will help people use their remaining vision more efficiently and effectively in pursuit of their chosen activities, tasks or hobbies. Most low vision services provide an assessment of a person's visual condition, a clinical examination and training in the use of prescribed devices and techniques. Low vision devices are prescribed by the low vision eye doctor when it is determined a person can use a device that can magnify, filter, or increase the usable field of vision.

The examination is performed by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist who specializes in the field of low vision. A low vision evaluation differs in emphasis from a "regular" eye exam in several ways. The primary distinction of a low vision exam is that it comprehensively evaluates vision functioning and its effect on daily life activities concentrating on an activity the person is not able to perform at all or would like to perform better. A detailed visual analysis is performed, low vision devices are prescribed and an instructional period follows. A follow-up examination is scheduled to ensure that the low vision devices are being used properly and are helpful.

Low vision centers sometimes have staff social workers who provide counseling and referral for other vision rehabilitation services as needed. Vision rehabilitation services include training in orientation and mobility, communication skills and activities of daily living.

Low vision devices are diverse and include simple hand-held or stand magnifiers, special glasses, clip-on magnifiers called loupes which improve close vision for reading and writing, and telescopic lenses for distance vision. Also, there are special filters for those with light- or glare- sensitive vision, prisms which move images to a different part of the retina and electronic devices such as closed circuit television systems (CCTVs) that enlarge printed material. Simple, but significantly helpful, non-optical accessories such as reading stands, special lamps and bold-line writing paper are considered low vision devices because they also improve a person's ability to perform certain tasks.

Low Vision Clinics in Westchester County

Kramer Vision Rehabilitation Center (914) 963-4661
Jewish Guild for the Blind/Montefiore Medical Center ext. 544
Department of Ophthalmology (914) 963-2024
75 Stratton Street South
Yonkers, New York 10701

Lighthouse Low Vision Services in Westchester (914) 948-6702
470 Mamaroneck Avenue
White Plains, New York 10605



REHABILITATION SERVICES

For People Who Are Legally Blind

NYS Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped

(914) 993-5370

150 Grand Street
White Plains, New York 10601

William Kane, District Office Manager

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped, a part of the NYS Department of Social Services, maintains a registry of all legally blind persons in the state. The ophthalmologist or optometrist registers the patient with the Commission. Once the person is registered and application completed, the Commission provides, purchases and/or coordinates services for eligible legally blind persons through its district offices.

The Commission provides children and their families with counseling, advocacy, case management and referral services. Based on assessments, an individual service plan for educational and vocational rehabilitation purposes is developed. Specific services may include low vision examinations, mobility and orientation instruction, aid in social adjustment and daily living skill training and equipment.

Vocational rehabilitation services are made available to adults through the Commission when the legal blindness constitutes a substantial handicap to employment and there is a reasonable expectation that VR services may benefit the individual in terms of employability, including a homemaking goal for those not interested in employment outside the home. The rehabilitation counselor assists the client in selecting a vocational goal based on an assessment of aptitudes, skills, interests and experiences and then they develop a plan. Services may include physical examinations, low vision aids and other prosthetic devices, training in prevocational skills, orientation and mobility, activities of

daily living as well as post-secondary education and training, on-the-job training and placement.

For registered legally blind clients, age 54 or older, who are ineligible for VR services but in need of non-vocationally oriented rehabilitation services, the Commission will refer the client to private agencies for daily living skills training, aid in social adjustment, communication skills training and mobility instruction.

For People with Partial Vision

NYS Office for Vocational Rehabilitation
55 Church Street
White Plains, New York 10601
Sandra Countee, District Manager

(914) 946-1313

The New York State Office for Vocational Rehabilitation, part of the NYS Department of Education, will provide, through its local offices, vocational rehabilitation services for people with visual handicaps who are not legally blind.



FINANCIAL BENEFITS

Social Security Benefits

Social Security Administration

(914) 997-7105

55 Church Street

White Plains, New York 10601

Persons who are legally blind may also be eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability benefits. These are available by application to the local Social Security district office. Other assistance may be available through the Westchester County Department of Social Services, based on financial need and eligibility.

Social Security Disability Insurance

Title II of the Social Security Act authorizes a program of Federal disability insurance benefits for workers who have contributed to the Social Security trust funds and become disabled or blind before retirement age. Disabled spouses and dependent children of fully insured workers are also eligible for disability benefits upon the retirement, disability or death of the insured worker. To qualify for monthly payments, an individual must be unable to engage in any substantial gainful activity (SGA) due to blindness. For determining SGA countable earnings for blind SSDI beneficiaries, there is a higher monthly limit (which changes annually) than there is for other disabled people. In 1988, it is \$700. Also, an exception to the "substantial gainful activity" test is made for otherwise eligible blind persons, 55 years of age or older. After 24 consecutive months of benefits, individuals become eligible to receive health insurance benefits under Title XVIII, Medicare.

Supplemental Security Income

This is a Federally administered cash assistance program designed to provide needy aged, blind and disabled persons with a minimum income. Applicants must meet a statutory test of financial need. Substantial gainful activity does not apply to blind SSI recipients. When determining SSI eligibility and payments for blind individuals, any earned income used to meet any expenses reasonably attributable to earning the income is excluded from countable earnings. This is known as the "blind work expenses incentive" and applies to blind SSI recipients only. Another exclusion is the plan for achieving self-support (PASS) which applies to SSI blind and disabled recipients only and allows SSA to exclude certain income and resources from being counted against SSI cash payments, if they are needed to achieve an approved vocational goal.

Veterans' Benefits

The Visual Impairment Services program of the Veterans' Administration is a comprehensive program within the VA that brings all the resources of the VA and other agencies in the community to bear on the problems associated with sight loss and legal blindness. The Visual Impairment Services Team is the diagnostic and treatment agent. It brings together administrative and professional services that assist legally blind veterans. There are VIST programs at most Veterans Administration Medical Centers, and at least one in every state. Among the services coordinated by VIST are: social work, ophthalmology, optometry, medicine/surgery, audiology, prosthetics and sensory aids, and veterans assistance. Once in the program a blinded veteran is entitled to receive annual VIST review (total health and benefits review), adjustment to blindness training, home improvements and structural alterations to homes, approved electronic and mechanical aids for the blind and necessary repair and replacement; guide dogs, including the expense of training and costs of the dog's medical care. There are specially adapted housing grants for service-connected veterans who, in addition to service-connected blindness, have the loss or loss of use of one lower extremity.

Legally blind veterans are eligible for admission to a VA blind rehabilitation center or clinic. There is a center in the Veterans' Administration Medical Center in West Haven, Connecticut and four other locations: Hines, Illinois; Birmingham, Alabama; Palo Alto, California; San Juan, Puerto Rico. Receipt of compensation or pension is not a prerequisite for eligibility for admission to a VA blind

rehabilitation center or clinic. Blind veterans of World War I, nonservice connected former POW's or veterans entitled to receive compensation from the VA for any service-connected condition or increased pension by reason of being permanently housebound are eligible to receive authorized aids for the blind.

New York State offers a blind annuity of \$500 a year, paid at \$41.66 a month, for veterans residing in the state. For assistance in applying for benefits, contact the coordinator for the blind at any VA medical center or the Westchester County Veterans' Service Agency at 285-2145.



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

Regional Early Childhood Direction Center

(914) 681-4658

St. Agnes Hospital
305 North Street
White Plains, New York 10605

Funded by the NYS Education Department, the Center assists parents and professionals by providing information and referral to local service agencies and individuals which will meet the educational, medical and social needs of children with disabilities who are below the age of five.

Physically Handicapped Children's Program

(914) 285-5202

Westchester County Department of Health
Bureau of Special Children's Services
112 East Post Road
White Plains, New York 10601

Any family with a child under 21 years of age who has a physically handicapping condition can apply for financial assistance with the cost of medical care and treatment. Parents who are financially able are required to share in the costs of medical services. All sources of private

health insurance must be utilized before program funds can be expended. Services covered by the program include surgical, medical and rehabilitative treatment involving in-hospital care, out-patient care, rehabilitative services and special appliances.

Westchester Lighthouse

(914) 761-3221

44 Church Street

White Plains, New York 10601

The following programs provide a comprehensive approach to meeting the special needs of children. The emphasis is on mainstreaming by working with the Committees on Special Education and other community programs as well as the NYS Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped.

The Parent-Infant Stimulation Program, now available five days a week, is geared to teaching parents ways of fostering sensory/motor development by creating a stimulating home environment for their severely impaired children.

The Preschool Vision Screening Program is designed to detect amblyopia, or "lazy eye", among pre-school children. Referral to professionals is then made.

In the Low Vision Clinic for Children, a pediatric optometrist provides evaluation services, prescribes low vision devices and provides instruction in their use. Social services are also provided. There is follow-up with school personnel and parents to ensure appropriate use of low vision aids.

The Jewish Guild for the Blind

(212) 769-6308

15 West 65th Street

New York, New York 10023

The Early Intervention Program for children from infancy to age three is located in New York City and is open to Westchester residents.

Educational Services

The two Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) serving students in Westchester County provide direct or consultative services to students based on the recommendations in their Individual Educational Plans (IEP's) by the home district's Committee on Special Education (CSE). Services are provided by itinerant specialists, either

in a self-contained program in a BOCES unit, or programmed within the student's own district.

BOCES, Southern Westchester

(Board of Cooperative Educational Services)

(914) 937-3820

17 Berkley Road

Port Chester, New York 10573

Dr. James Stowell, Director of Special Education

BOCES, Northern Westchester/Putnam

(914) 245-2700

Yorktown Heights, New York 10598

Mark Costello, Director of Special Education



**HEALTH RELATED PROGRAMS FOR
ADULTS AND SENIORS**

Day Program

The primary purpose of the comprehensive medical model adult day care program is to help people with vision and health problems to remain independent in their home in the community.

Guildcare

The Jewish Guild for the Blind

(914) 963-4661

75 Stratton Street South

Ext. 590

Yonkers, New York 10701

Services: Comprehensive program offering medical, nursing, rehabilitation, counseling and recreation services. Services include

transportation, morning nutrition and hot lunch. Free to Medicaid recipients; sliding scale fee for non-Medicaid. Hours are Monday through Friday, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Skilled Nursing and Health Related Facility

The Jewish Guild for the Blind

(914) 963-4661

Home for Aged Blind
75 Stratton Street South
Yonkers, New York 10701

The Home is the only program in the Northeast geared to providing health care for visually impaired older adults. All residents have access to medical and dental services, nursing care, rehabilitation ophthalmology and low vision services, social services and recreation in a physical environment with activities and staff training geared toward this population.

The Newman Center, a 22-bed skilled nursing unit, is designed to meet the long-term care needs of dementia patients with functional visual loss.



LEISURE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Social Programs

YM-YWHA of Southern Westchester

(914)664-0500

Visually Impaired Senior Adults (VISA)
30 Oakley Avenue
Mt. Vernon, New York 10550

Services: Vision services including counseling, orientation, education, information and referral, and transportation are provided. Also, participation in ongoing "Y" older adult senior canteen recreation program and kosher nutrition program. Hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

VISIONS

(212) 477-3800

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired
817 Broadway, 11th floor
New York, New York 10003

Services: Adult recreation program with speakers, discussion groups, recreation programs, on the second Tuesday of the month, from October to June from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Scarsdale Congregational Church, 2 Heathcote Road, Scarsdale.

Westchester County Office for the Aging

(914) 682-3000

214 Central Avenue
White Plains, New York 10606

Services: Information and referral, case management, entitlement assistance, health education, family support and enrichment programs are provided at nutrition sites, senior clubs and centers and senior apartment buildings.

Westchester Lighthouse

(914) 761-3221

44 Church Street
White Plains, New York 10601

Services: Mainstreamed program participation is arranged in community recreation and education programs with sliding fee schedule. The visually impaired older adult recreation program meets in various localities throughout the county at different hours. Bowling takes place at White Plains Bowl.

Meeting Places:

White Plains Unitarian Church
Hugh Doyle Senior Center, New Rochelle
Yorktown Senior Citizen Center
Coyne Park Senior Center, Yonkers
Memorial Methodist Church, White Plains
monthly all-county meetings

Self-Help Support Groups

Support groups provide an opportunity for individuals and family members to explore feelings and concerns about blindness or loss of useful vision, to share experiences and feelings and to become acquainted with resources in the community.

Westchester Independent Living Center

(914) 682-3926

297 Knollwood Road

White Plains, New York 10607

A support group for visually impaired and blind people and one composed of family members, are led by professional facilitators.

Westchester Lighthouse

(914) 761-3221

44 Church Street

White Plains, New York 10601

A support group for people recently experiencing vision loss and a support group for friends and family members, are led by a professional facilitator.

Camping Programs**VISIONS**

(212) 477-3800

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

817 Broadway

New York, New York 10003

Spring Valley, New York is the location for summer camp sessions and weekend camp during fall and spring. There are some fees; camp is open to blind individuals, 18 and above but tends to attract elderly people. There are special family programs for blind children and their parents and for blind parents and their children.

Westchester Lighthouse

(914) 761-3221

44 Church Street

White Plains, New York 10601

The Lighthouse summer camp is in Waretown, N. J. There are fees; transportation is provided from White Plains. Placement can also be made for adults in sighted camps. Fees are charged and transportation can be arranged. The Lighthouse also arranges special trips and events, including Elderhostel.

**Residential Camps and Other Programs
for Children and Adults**

Each year the Office for the Disabled publishes a directory listing residential and day camp programs, summer and year round, as well

as other leisure activities. Call the Office for the Disabled at (914) 285-2957 and ask for Camps, Leisure & Support Programs for Disabled Children & Adults.

Recreation and Sports Activities

Fifty-Two Association (914) 941-6080
Cedar Lane (212) 986-5281
Ossining, New York 10562

The Center and its sports complex is specially adapted for blind and physically disabled persons and offers sports, swimming, boating and skiing activities on its lakes and trails. The Association also sponsors free ski clinics at locations throughout the country. Call for applications and information.

NYS Games for the Physically Challenged (516) 669-1000
P. O. Box 247
Belmont Lake State Park
Babylon, New York 11702

Provides fitness and training workshops and competition (ages 8-21) in a variety of modified sports for young people with physical disabilities. Demonstration sports are open to physically challenged individuals of all ages. Competitions are held twice each year and there is no qualifying competition or prior workshop attendance required.

Achilles Track Club (914) 428-7457
For people who want to enjoy running regardless of disability, the Club provides training and financial assistance. A Westchester branch of the New York City club is forming. Ask for Jeff.

Scent Garden (914) 739-4301
Town of Cortlandt

A year-round Touch and Smell Garden and Trail for the blind is located in the Town of Cortlandt. The 1/4 mile black-topped trail is also wheelchair accessible. Materials are available for self-guided tours during office hours. Tour guides are available.

Skiing and Instruction

Ski For Light

(703) 276-9191

1104 N. Stafford Street
Arlington, Virginia 22201

This is a national program providing ski instruction for people who are blind or visually impaired.

Ski-Windham

(518) 734-4300

Windham, New York 12496

Special services and instruction for blind skiers and those with other disabilities are available at this ski area. Lift, lesson and equipment, \$15.

National Recreation and Sports Associations

American Blind Bowling Association

(502) 896-8039

150 N. Bellaire Avenue
Louisville, Kentucky 40206

Blind Outdoor Leisure Development

(303) 925-8922

533 E. Main Street
Aspen, Colorado 81611

Cultural Activities

Museum of American Folk Art

(212) 481-3080

444 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

Irma Shore, Access to Art

The first phase of the Access to Art project, designed to make art more accessible, The Art Resource Directory for the Blind and Visually Impaired provides information on organizations, newsletters, classes, workshops and competitions for artists, galleries with special facilities and information on arts materials. Available on cassettes, in braille and large print.

Queens Museum

(718) 592-9700

New York City Building
Flushing Meadow Park
Flushing, New York 11368

“Please Touch” displays and tactile tour. Group rate is \$1 per person with a minimum number of 15 people.

The Jewish Guild for the Blind (212) 769-6200
15 West 65th Street
New York, New York 10023

Gallery of “Life Masks” of famous people in the Guild lobby.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (212) 787-5623
140 West 65th Street Access Hotline
New York, New York 10023

Braille and large-type house programs and notes for concerts by the New York Philharmonic, The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and for selected Great Performances concerts were made available, on a trial basis, at tables in the lobbies of Alice Tully and Avery Fisher Halls. Spoken programs are prepared on audio cassette by the Jewish Guild for the Blind. The Coordinator of services for the disabled can be reached at (212) 877-1800.

Travel Information

Access Pass to New York State Facilities

New York State provides permanently disabled residents free use of non-concessioned activities and facilities, for which there is usually a fee, in parks, historic sites and recreation facilities operated by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the Department of Environmental Conservation. A person who is totally without sight, legally blind or who receives disability insurance benefits or SSI income is eligible. Write ACCESS PASS, State Parks, Albany, New York 12238.

Golden Access Passport for Federal Facilities

This pass provides free lifetime entrance to all federal parks, monuments, etc., which charge entrance fees. It does not cover fees charged by private concessionaires. There is a 50% discount on federal use fees which are charged for facilities and services. The Passport is not available by mail. You must show proof of legal blindness in person at a Federal recreation area.

Train and Bus Travel

On some rail and bus lines a blind person and a sighted companion may travel for one fare if assistance is necessary. Guide dogs ride free. A blind person accompanied by a guide dog and a sighted companion is not eligible for this privilege nor are two blind persons traveling together.

Blind passengers who travel on Amtrak with attendants are entitled to a 25% discount for themselves and their attendants. They need identification from an accredited agency or a letter from a physician confirming legal blindness. Guide dogs are permitted to ride at no extra charge.

Continental Trailways and Greyhound allow a companion to ride free on interstate trips with a disabled traveler who needs assistance in boarding, exiting and traveling on a bus. A letter from a physician is required.

Turn to the section on Transportation for the following programs:

Westchester County Reduced Fare I.D. Card
MTA Reduced Fare I.D. Card
Westchester ParaTransit

Reading Materials: Sources and Services

New York State Library

(518) 474-5935

for the Blind and Visually Handicapped

(800) 342-3688

Cultural Education Center
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12230

A Regional Library of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress, the NYS Library provides free library services to persons who are unable to read or use standard printed material because of visual or physical impairments. Books and magazines in recorded formats (talking books) or in braille are delivered to eligible readers by postage-free mail and are returned in the same manner. Specially designed phonographs and cassette players are also loaned free to persons borrowing talking books.

Talking Books, spoken-word recordings of popular literature, may also be purchased or rented. They are available on disc and cassette. There are over 50 sources, producers and distributors, of spoken-word recordings which may be purchased. A guide to these resources, No. 87-1, which lists names, addresses and telephone numbers is

available from the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Washington D. C. 20542.

Westchester Library System

(914) 592-8214

Special Services Department

8 Westchester Plaza

Cross Westchester Executive Park

Elmsford, New York 10523

Provides homebound/shut-in services through local libraries, and maintains catalogs of the collections of books and magazines in braille and those in recorded formats. Has Visual-Tek reading aid available. White Plains Public Library has a Kurzweil reading machine.

Recording for the Blind, Inc.

(609) 452-0606

20 Roszel Road

Princeton, New Jersey 08540

This is a national, non-profit voluntary organization which provides recorded, education books free-on-loan to individuals who cannot read standard printed material because of visual, physical or perceptual handicaps. A catalog of over 60,000 titles is available for a prepaid fee of \$14. To borrow, you must register with RFB by completing and returning an application which provides information on the borrower as well as a signed statement by a professional confirming and specifying the disability.

If a desired book is not in the catalog, RFB will record it if it falls within the educational scope of their program and if it is a complete, published and copyrighted text. To record a book, they require two identical print copies of the volume with your name and address in pencil on the flyleaf and a completed order form and sales slip if reimbursement for the second print copy is desired. Send these to the above address or to RFB Recording Studio, 101 East 70th St., New York 10021, or call (212) 517-9820, or 545 Fifth Avenue, Suite 204, N. Y. 10017, (212) 557-5720

Other Sources for Reading Materials in Different Formats

American Bible Society 1865 Broadway New York, New York 10023	(212) 581-7400
American Printing House for the Blind, Inc. 1839 Frankfort Avenue Louisville, Kentucky 40206	(502) 895-2405
Braille Institute of America, Inc. 741 N. Vermont Avenue Los Angeles, California 90029	(213) 663-1111
Choice Magazine Listening 14 Maple Street Port Washington, New York 11050	(516) 883-8280
Jewish Braille Institute of America, Inc. 110 East 30th Street New York, New York 10016	(212) 889-2525
Jewish Guild for the Blind Cassette Library 15 West 65th Street New York, New York 10023	(212) 769-6200
National Braille Press, Inc. 88 St. Stephen Street Boston, Massachusetts 02115	(617) 266-6160
Xavier Society for the Blind 154 East 23rd Street New York, New York 10010	(212) 473-7800

A Sampling of Catalogs of Large Print Books Available for Purchase

John Curley and Associates, Inc. P. O. Box 37 South Yarmouth, Massachusetts 02664	(617) 394-1282
G. K. Hall and Company 70 Lincoln Street Boston, Massachusetts 02111	(800) 343-2806

Thorndike Press
One Mile Road - P.O. Box 159
Thorndike, Maine 04986

(207) 948-2962

Large Print Book Club

Large Print Home Library
Customer Service Center
Doubleday & Company
501 Franklin Avenue
Garden City, New York 11530

(800) 343-4300
Operator 355

Large Print Periodicals and Magazines

Dialogue Publications, Inc.
3100 South Oak Park Avenue
Berwyn, Illinois 60402-3095

(312) 749-1908

New York Times Large Type Weekly
P.O. Box 54206
Boulder, Colorado 80321

(800) 631-2500

Readers' Digest Fund for the Blind, Inc.
Large Type Edition
P. O. Box 241
Mt. Morris, Illinois 61054

815) 734-6963

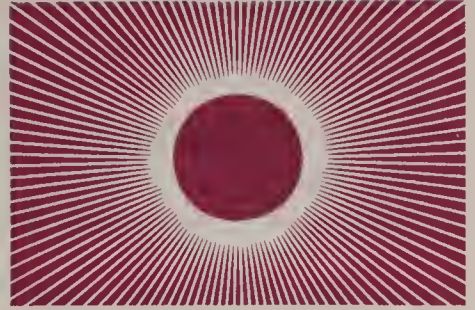
Radio Reading Services

In-Touch Networks, Inc.
322 West 48th Street
New York, New York 10036

(212) 586-5588

This organization provides a radio reading service for visually and physically disabled residents of this tri-state area over the closed circuit channel of WKCR-FM seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Volunteers broadcast daily newspapers and current magazines.

Every print handicapped person is eligible to receive, free of charge, the special radio receiver which is necessary to pick up the closed circuit program. By law, the receiver must remain the property of In-Touch. It is recommended that interested people check the WKCR-FM reception in their area, (89.9 on the regular FM dial), before they request an application for a special receiver.



GUIDE DOGS

Guide dogs provide mobility assistance and encourage a more independent life for legally blind people. There are a number of guide dog training organizations in the metropolitan area. All have an application process which requires a medical report, orientation and mobility information and personal references, which indicate that the person is capable of caring for and maintaining a guide dog. After an evaluation, the approved applicant is placed in the next available class, although many have waiting lists.

It is an unlawful discriminatory practice to discriminate against a blind person on the basis of his use of a guide dog. Article 4-B, Section 47-47-c, NYS Civil Rights Law.

Guiding Eyes for the Blind

(914) 245-4024

611 Granite Springs Road
Yorktown Heights, New York 10598

This is a residential training school providing 26 days of training. Transportation costs are the responsibility of the student. The minimum age is 16. Although the fee is \$150, no student is denied a guide dog due to the lack of funds.

Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation

(203) 243-5200

P. O. Box 142
Bloomfield, Connecticut 06002

The blind individual is trained by a Fidelco instructor in the home community and place of work. The cost of training is \$150.

Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind, Inc.

(516) 265-2121

371 East Jericho Turnpike
Smithtown, New York 11787

There are no costs to students, other than personal expenses in this residential training program that takes 25 days.

The Seeing Eye, Inc.

(201) 539-4425

Washington Valley Road
Morristown, New Jersey 07960

As a matter of policy, The Seeing Eye expects each person who reports for instruction to pay the fee of \$150 for the first dog and \$50 for each subsequent dog. Either fee includes the dog, equipment, training, room and board and round trip air transportation. The fee can be paid over any length of time that is convenient to the individual.



TRANSPORTATION

Westchester County Office for the Disabled

(914) 285-2957

Michaelian Office Building - Room 936
148 Martine Avenue
White Plains, New York 10601
Richard Manley, Director

Parking Permits:

Special Parking Permits are available to County residents who can certify that they have a mobility impairment. County permits are issued by the Office to disabled drivers and to non-disabled motorists who transport disabled passengers. New York State permits may be obtained from your local city or village clerk. Special license plates may be obtained through the N.Y.S. Department of Motor Vehicles when the registration comes up for renewal if the car is registered in the name of the person with the disability.

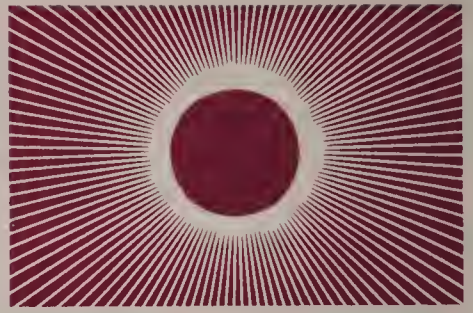
Reduced Fare for Public Transportation:

Reduced bus fare I.D. cards for use on Westchester County buses are available to those people who suffer from transportation handicaps, including mobility, sensory, and mental disabilities. Applications may be obtained from the Office. Pictures need to be taken and the cost is \$2.00 at this writing.

Special permits for discounts on Metro North trains and on New York City buses and subways are also available under a program administered by the Metropolitan Transit Authority. This application is also available through the Office for the Disabled.

ParaTransit:

ParaTransit is a service sponsored by the Westchester County Department of Transportation and the Office for the Disabled which provides curb-to-curb transportation for people who are unable to use regular public bus transit services due to a severe physical or developmental disability. People with visual impairments may be eligible if they are unable to benefit from "travel training" on the public buses. People who use the reduced-fare card for the buses are not eligible to apply for ParaTransit. The system, open to those who meet the eligibility requirements, runs six days a week: Monday through Wednesday between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Thursday and Friday between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. and Saturday between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. Appointments must be made 24 hours in advance and medical trips have the highest priority, with employment and training, second; after that all trips are treated equally.



TECHNOLOGY

Low Vision and Assistive Devices

There are many types of low vision aids that can help improve useful sight when conventional or contact lenses cannot. Low vision optical aids range from simple magnifying lenses to sophisticated lens systems that provide magnification or field enlargement. They include telescopic lenses for distance vision, electronic magnifiers for close work such as reading. Non-optical low vision aids include special high intensity illuminations, filters and large print materials.

Other aids covering all aspects of life at home, at work and play include watches, calculators and scales that talk; writing guides; raised letter and braille markings; clothing and cooking aids; large print and braille playing cards and games; soccer balls and soft balls that beep. There are devices which expand telephone use including audible light sensors designed for use with multiple-line phones; automatic dialers allowing for one-button dialing or some which respond to voice. There are speaker phones, headsets, and other holding aids and a range of tactile signalers for deaf-blind people.

Selecting and Obtaining Devices

These agencies have facilities where you can investigate and try out devices before purchasing them.

American Foundation for the Blind

(212) 620-2000

15 West 16th Street
New York, New York 10010

Jewish Guild for the Blind

(914) 963-2024

Vision Resource Center

(914) 963-4661

75 Stratton Street South
Yonkers, New York 10701

ext. 545

Westchester Lighthouse
44 Church Street
White Plains, New York 10601

(914) 761-3221

Mail Order Catalogs Listing Low Vision and Other Devices

American Foundation for the Blind
15 West 16th Street
New York, New York 10011

(212) 620-2000
(to Order) (201) 862-8838

- “Products for People with Vision Problems”
- “International Guide to Aids/Appliances for Blind and Visually Handicapped Persons”

American Printing House for the Blind
P. O. Box 6085
Louisville, Kentucky 40206

(502) 895-2405

- “Catalogue of Instructional Aids, Tools and Supplies for Visually Handicapped”

CLEO Aids for Daily Living
3957 Mayfield Road
Cleveland, Ohio 44121

(212) 382-9700

Independent Living Aids, Inc.
27 East Mall
Plainview, New York 11803

(516) 752-8080

Maxi Aids
86-30 102nd St
Richmond Hill, New York 11418

(718) 846-4799

**National Association
for the Visually Handicapped**
22 West 21st Street
New York, New York 10010

(212) 889-3141

- “Visual Aids and Informational Material”

Science Products for the Blind
Box A
Southeastern, Pennsylvania 19399

(800) 233-3121

Vis-Aids, Inc
102-09 Jamaica Avenue
P. O. Box 26
Richmond Hill, New York 11418

(718) 847-4734

Information on Devices Relating to Telephone Use

AT & T Special Needs Center
2001 Route 46
Parsippany, New Jersey 07054

1 (800) 233-1222
(TDD) (800) 833-3232

High-Tech Devices

Many companies have developed adaptive equipment which makes the new computer technology accessible to visually impaired people. With the aid of appropriate technological devices, blind and visually impaired persons can independently access, process, store and transmit information on a par with sighted people.

The difference lies in the form in which the information is displayed: on a video screen, in regular print, in large print, braille, or synthetic speech or voice output. Application programs (software) provide flexible review capabilities and other special applications. Some programs can translate from braille to print as well as print to braille with the assistance of a braille output device. There are large print video displays, processors which enlarge monitor output from 2 to 10 times and can move displays around when they are too large for the screen. The Optacon, a reading system which converts type into tactile output, comes in a compact module which can "read" a CRT. There are simple devices like braille keyboards and complex ones like optical character reader/talking computer systems which can "read" typed materials directly into the computer and then voice them aloud. Talking products are a marvel of 20th century technology. They become the equalizers which enable blind and visually impaired people to do the same work as sighted peers, enlarging career opportunities and meeting the demands of the information revolution.

Some Resources for Technology Information

**The National Association of Blind
and Visually Impaired Computer Users**
P.O. Box 1352
Roseville, California 95661-1352

Voice (917) 783-0374
Modem (916) 786-3923

CompuHelp, a database for the blind and visually impaired community, provides for an ongoing exchange of data between manufacturers, self-help groups and other interested parties. It includes software for children, teenagers and adults, pertaining to games, education and word processing.

American Foundation for the Blind (212) 620-2000
National Technical Center
15 West 16th Street
New York, New York 10011

Baruch College, CUNY (212) 725-7644
Computer Center for the Visually Impaired
17 Lexington Avenue, Box 515
New York, New York 10010

Carroll Center for the Blind (617) 969-6200
770 Centre Street
Newton, Massachusetts 02158

National Braille Press (617) 266-6160
88 St. Stephen Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02115

Publishes "A Beginner's Guide to Personal Computers for the
Blind and Visually Impaired".

New York Association for the Blind (212) 355-2200
The Lighthouse
111 East 59th Street
New York, New York 10022



MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Telephone Privileges

Dial Operator Privileges: Advise the business office indicated on your phone bill that you are visually impaired and will require special service. Then you can Dial 0, 411 or 555-1212 and the operator will dial the phone number you request free of charge.

Directory Assistance Exemption: To qualify for this free assistance, a form must be obtained from and returned to the Telephone Communications Center (212)395-2400. This form must be accompanied by a certification letter from your ophthalmologist. Then you can Dial O (operator) and the operator will look up any number you need free of charge.

Free telephone dials with large and raised numbers for both rotary and touchtone phones are available from the Telephone Communications Center, (212) 395-2400.

Postal Privileges

Outgoing and return postage is free for the blind if the material relates to the vision disability, is on tape or is printed in 14-point type or larger and "Material for the Blind" is written on the envelope in the upper right-hand corner.

Income Taxes - Internal Revenue Service

Under prior law a taxpayer could claim an extra exemption for being legally blind or age 65 or older. These extra exemptions also applied to the taxpayer's spouse. The Tax Reform Act of 1986 eliminated the extra exemption for age and blindness beginning with the 1987 return. It replaced the extra exemption with the Additional Standard Deduction. The additional standard deduction is the total of additional amounts allowed for age, over 65, and for blindness.

The dollar value of the additional standard deduction will depend on a taxpayer's filing status. The chart below shows the additional deduction amount for each filing status:

Filing Status	Dollar Value of One Additional Amount
Single	\$750
Married filing jointly	600
Married filing separately	600
Head of Household	750
Qualifying Widow(er)	600

According to Schedule R, if a medical doctor states that blindness is permanent, then a doctor's letter needs to be submitted only once. If

a doctor indicates that there is a possibility of improvement, then a letter has to accompany each tax return until sight either improves or becomes permanent blindness. Publication 920, "Explanation of the Tax Reform Act for Individuals", and Publication #907, "Tax Information for Handicapped and Disabled Individuals" is available from the Internal Revenue Service. Call 1-800-424-3676.

Identification Cards

The American Foundation for the Blind issues identification cards to legally blind persons. This card costs \$6.00, and can be used for identification for discounts when traveling on some bus lines. Call AFB at (212) 620-2000 for an application.

A New York State resident, 18 years of age or older who does not have a valid driver license, may apply for the Non-Driver Photo ID Card. The card contains an identification number. The fee is \$5.50 for a card which is issued for four years. The cards are obtained by filling out Form MV-441D at the local Motor Vehicle Bureau Office. Two acceptable proofs of identify, one with correct address and one with proof of date of birth are required. In case of loss, the replacement fee is \$4.50.

Banking

Chemical Bank has a total of 69 braille automated teller machines in the metropolitan area that can be used by customers of any bank that is a member of the New York Cash Exchange or Masterteller. Many banks offer large-size large print checks. Contact your local bank.

New Television Description System

Descriptive Video Service is a new development which can provide an oral description of action, setting, costume, lighting which can be carried on a separate channel available on stereo television sets. Still in the early stages, it was used on a PBS broadcast of "Strange Interlude". An adapter could be purchased for TV sets which do not have stereo capability. Like closed-captioned television for the deaf it will probably take time before such service will become commonplace.

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND
15 WEST 16th STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10011



CIVIL RIGHTS AND ADVOCACY

Voting Rights

Guide Dogs, who are assisting people with disabilities, must be admitted into all buildings.

Federal law allows voters with disabilities to be accompanied and to receive assistance by another person in the voting booth.

"White Cane" Laws

These laws establish the rights of the handicapped to full use of streets, highways, sidewalks, public buildings, public facilities and public places.

Provisions also include the establishment of the principles that it is the duty of drivers approaching the handicapped to take reasonable precautions and also that failure of a blind person to use a cane or a guide dog does not constitute contributory negligence.

The right of blind or visually handicapped people to be accompanied by guide dogs in all public places is established. Violators are subject to fines and even imprisonment.

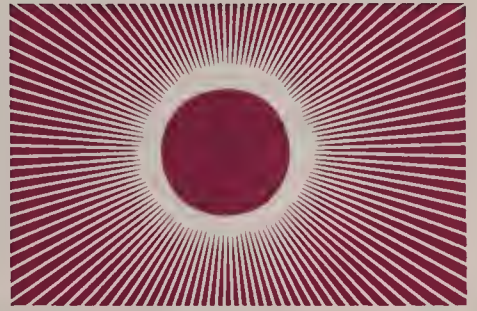
New York State Human Rights Law

New York State
Division of Human Rights
30 Glenn Street
White Plains, New York 10601

(914) 949-4394

Anti-discriminatory laws are enforced by state civil rights agencies and provide remedies which may include actual damages and injunctions.

Complaints are brought to the agency which has the responsibility for investigating charges when there is a basis or reasonable cause. The agency is empowered to have an administrative hearing where evidence by both sides is presented to determine whether there has been discrimination in education, employment, housing, or public accommodation, credit and certain commercial practices.



PREVENTION

Most eye injuries can be prevented and most eye problems can be successfully treated if diagnosed early. There are three key eye care reminders in order to preserve sight:

- * Having routine eye examinations for early detection purposes
- * Taking simple precautions which will avoid eye injuries
- * Learning first aid for emergencies to limit eye damage

Screening

Early screening during children's preschool years, before the age of six, will detect three common problems: "lazy eye" or amblyopia; poorly aligned or "cross eyes" called strabismus, and poor vision.

Young people should have their vision checked periodically because the onset of myopia is during the pre-teen and teen years and near-sightedness can interfere with their school success.

After age 35, people need regular check-ups since glaucoma is more prevalent and may not cause any symptoms. Also people begin experiencing problems with reading the small print, needing more light.

Regular examination of eyes after age 50 is necessary because of changes resulting from the normal aging process and the incidence of cataracts. A diagnosis of one disease does not preclude other complications so regular check-ups are important.

Safety

It is important to take precautions in potentially hazardous conditions since 90% of eye injuries are considered preventable with simple measures such as wearing the correct safety glasses. Whether at home or at work or at play, eyes need to be protected by wearing the right eye gear for the situation: protecting against harsh chemicals or airborne particles, flying objects, intense light rays or cuts.

First Aid

Unless you are sure it is a minor irritant, like dust, do not try to remove particles. Do not rub your eyes or use dirty fingers. Try pulling upper eyelid out and down, over the lower lid. If you can see the irritant, try to remove it with a corner of a clean handkerchief or flush it out with tap water.

Chemical burns are true emergencies; the eyes must be flushed immediately for 15-30 minutes or damage may occur. Even after washing, the eyes should be examined by a doctor and it would be wise to bring a sample or a description of the chemical involved.

When working around chemicals, contact lenses alone are not sufficient protection since they can absorb fumes unless protective goggles are worn.

To avoid corneal burns from radiation, you must always wear special goggles when tanning indoors; sun glasses are not enough protection.

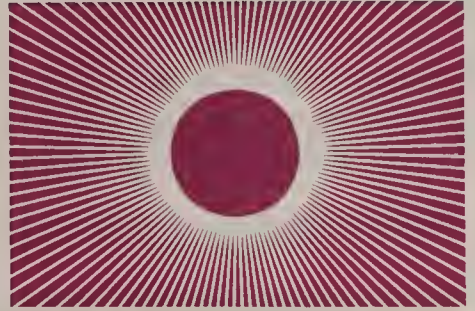
If there is a severe blow to the eyes, bruises or cuts, go to the emergency room immediately. Even with a black eye, if there is double vision, vision loss, blurred vision or persistent pain, see a doctor as soon as possible.

Other Tips on Good Eye Care are:

Do not share eye cosmetics because they can spread eye infections.

Heed the following warning signs. They may indicate eye problems requiring immediate medical attention:

Persistent pain or unusual sensitivity to light
Seeing rainbows or halos around lights
Persistently seeing "flashing lights"
Loss, blurring or any change in vision.



WESTCHESTER AGENCIES

Guiding Eyes for the Blind Inc.

(914) 245-4024

611 Granite Springs Road
Yorktown Heights, New York 10598
Martin Yablonsky, Director

The Jewish Guild for the Blind

(914) 963-4661

75 Stratton Street South
Yonkers, New York 10701
John Heimerdinger, Director

New York Diabetes Association,

(914) 948-0035

Westchester Chapter
158 Westchester Avenue
White Plains, New York 10601
Charlotte Schacter, Director

New York State Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped

(914) 993-5370

150 Grand Street
White Plains, New York 10601
William Kane, District Office Manager

New York State Office for Vocational Rehabilitation 55 Church Street White Plains, New York 10601 Sandra Countee, District Manager	(914) 946-1313
Retinitis Pigmentosa Foundation, West. Chapter 7 Colvin Road Scarsdale, New York 10583 Louise Boardman	(914) 472-6644
Westchester County Office for the Aging 214 Central Avenue White Plains, New York 10606 Mae Carpenter, Director	(914) 682-3000
Westchester County Office for the Disabled Michaelian Office Building 148 Martine Avenue-Room 936 White Plains, New York 10601 Richard Manley, Director	(914) 285-2957 (TTY) (914) 682-3408
Westchester Disabled on the Move 984 N. Broadway Yonkers, New York 10701 Mildred Caballero-Ho, Director	(914) 968-4717
Westchester Independent Living Center 297 Knollwood Road White Plains, New York 10607 Joseph Bravo, Director	(914) 682-3926
Westchester Lighthouse 44 Church Street White Plains, New York 10601 Elliot Dalrymple, Director	(914) 761-3221
YM-YWHA of Southern Westchester 30 Oakley Avenue Mt. Vernon, New York 10550 Susan Bender, Director	(914) 664-0500

Yonkers Office for the Handicapped
201 Palisade Avenue
Yonkers, New York 10703
Beverly Levine, Director

(914) 964-3561



NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Council of the Blind
1010 Vermont Avenue, N.W. - Suite 1100
Washington, D.C. 20036

(202) 393-3666

Advocates for legislation, offers legal assistance in discrimination and benefits cases, provides information services, referrals and workshops. Monthly magazine in all formats.

American Foundation for the Blind
15 West 16th Street
New York, New York 10011

(212) 620-2000

Designs, manufactures and sells devices through mail order and retail store; publishes a directory of agencies serving the visually handicapped, pamphlets, books, device catalog; public education materials and films; extensive library.

Blinded Veterans Association
1726 M Street, N.W. - Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20036

(202) 347-4010

Advocacy, assistance and fellowship for members.

Eye Bank Association of America
1511 K Street NW - Suite 830
Washington, D. C. 20005-1401

(202) 628-4280

Promotes awareness of eye-banks and certifies technicians.

**Helen Keller National Center
for Deaf-Blind Youth and Adults**

(516) 944-8900

111 Middle Neck Road
Sands Point, New York 11050

Rehabilitation and research programs for deaf-blind people.

National Association for Visually Handicapped

(212) 889-3141

22 West 21st Street
New York, New York 10010

Provides information, referral and direct services for those who can benefit from large print; prints and distributes textbooks and pleasure books, maintains lending-library of large print materials; publishes adult and children's newsletters.

National Institute of Health

(301) 496-5248

National Eye Institute
Building 31, Room 6A32
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Supports and conducts research, provides statistics and public education materials.

National Federation of the Blind

(301) 659-9314

1800 Johnson Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

Membership organization provides advocacy, public education and information services. Monthly magazine.

National Society to Prevent Blindness

(212) 684-3222

30 East 29th Street
New York, New York 10016

Sponsors community screening and testing programs, public education, research and advocacy, materials and films.

New Eyes for the Needy, Inc.,

(201) 376-4903

549 Millburn Avenue - P.O. Box 332
Short Hills, New Jersey 07078

Provides funds for glasses etc. to medically indigent persons.

The RP Foundation Fighting Blindness

1401 Mt. Royal Avenue - 4th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21207

(800) 638-2300
(TDD) (301) 225-9409

Funds research; provides referral and support services.
Publishes quarterly newspaper. Westchester Chapter.

Sensory Aids Foundation

399 Sherman Avenue - Suite 12
Palo Alto, California 94306

(415) 329-0430

Provides advocacy, public education and employer orientation to sensory aids equipment which make jobs accessible. Because of limitations on funding sources, SAF is limited to serving residents of California but will answer specific questions by telephone and mail.



GLOSSARY

Ambylopia is reduced visual acuity in one eye with the absence of organic disease. It is the result of cortical suppression or an improperly focused or directed retinal image in early childhood.

Cataract is an opacity, or clouding of the eye's lens which blocks the passage of light needed for vision. Cataracts are particularly related to aging. Symptoms of cataracts include sensitivity to glare; reduced vision; altered color perception; and image distortion, in which straight lines often appear wavy. When the visual impairment becomes severe and the cataract has matured or "ripened," surgery is indicated.

Diabetic Retinopathy is caused by diabetes and is characterized by small blood vessel damage to the retina resulting in occlusion of vision. Multiple hemorrhages appear throughout the retina, causing central vision to be impaired.

Glaucoma is an eye disease associated with too much fluid pressure within the eye. The increased pressure damages the optic nerve, which carries visual information to the brain. Early diagnosis is essential, for if medical treatment is prompt, the progress of glaucoma can be stopped; but sight already destroyed by glaucoma cannot be restored. Screening for glaucoma should be part of a yearly eye examination for everyone and should include a family history, and a review of the patient's medication.

Legal Blindness is defined as the condition in which central visual acuity is 20/200 or less in the better eye after correction or the field of vision is no wider than 20 degrees. A person with a visual acuity of 20/200 can see at 20 feet what a fully sighted person can see at 200 feet. A diagnosis of legal blindness does not indicate that an individual is totally blind. In fact, most legally blind individuals are able to utilize their remaining vision with the help of low vision aids and devices.

Low Vision is bilateral reduced visual acuity or visual field, resulting from a disorder of the visual system that cannot be corrected to normal levels by medicine, surgery or corrective lenses. When this reduction in vision interferes with the patient's normal functioning in his environment, it is known as low vision.

Macular Degeneration is characterized by a loss of central vision. The macula is a small area of the retina which is responsible for fine detail and distinct vision. Symptoms include difficulty with reading, inability to recognize faces, and distortion or disappearance of the visual field straight ahead. It is caused by hardening of the arteries in the back of the eye. It does not cause total blindness.

Myopia is nearsightedness, a condition in which the uncorrected eye sees clearly near at hand while distance vision is reduced.

Nystagmus is the short, rapid involuntary oscillation of the eyeball.

Optic Atrophy is a degeneration of the optic nerve fibers; visual loss usually accompanies the condition.

Presbyopia is the normal reduction in the eye's ability to focus to see near objects, usually related to age.

Retinal Detachment can occur when a hole or "rip" in the retina allows the inner retina layer to separate from the back layer of the eye. Fluid can then enter through the break, seep between the layers, and further pressure the inner layer to peel or detach. Though some retina breaks occur as the result of injury and other causes, most often the break is associated with retinal degeneration accompanying aging.

Retinitis Pigmentosa is a hereditary degeneration and atrophy of the retina which results in night blindness and eventual loss of peripheral vision.

Strabismus is the failure of the two eyes to direct their gaze at the same object because of the muscle imbalance or neurological damage (i.e. stroke). Double vision may result.

We wish to thank staff members of the following organizations for their assistance and cooperation in preparing this booklet:

Jewish Guild for the Blind

New York State Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped

Westchester County Office for the Aging

Westchester Disabled on the Move

Westchester Independent Living Center

Westchester Lighthouse

YM-YWHA of Southern Westchester

Yonkers Office for the Handicapped

Artwork through the courtesy of the American Foundation for the Blind.

NOTES

NOTES

HV1791

W52 In focus: a resource
In8 guide for people with
 visual impairments.

61

DATE DUE			

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND
15 WEST 16th STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10011

Printing courtesy of AT&T



Westchester County

Andrew P. O'Rourke
County Executive

Richard Manley, Director
Office for the Disabled